



# Open Government at ACUS

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## ADMINISTRATIVE CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED STATES

### Home

The Administrative Conference of the United States (ACUS) is an independent federal agency that is committed to open government and is dedicated to achieving the goals of openness, transparency and accountability to the American public. Recognizing that experts don't have all the answers, ACUS uses the latest Web 2.0 technologies to share data and solicit input from the public. ACUS works collaboratively with its public-private partnership of subject matter experts to streamline and enhance government processes at little cost to the taxpayer. The agency has hosted public meetings using Skype, Livestream, and teleconferencing technology to engage stakeholders and involve them as ACUS Committees develop recommendations and in the words of President Obama, "make government work better."

Although the agency was just recently reestablished in April 2010, it is exploring and promoting the most efficient means of sharing information and responsibility among the federal government, state and local governments, businesses and citizens. In the [Memorandum on Transparency and Open Government](#), issued on January 21, 2009, President Obama instructed the Director of the Office of Management and Budget to issue an [Open Government Directive](#). The Open Government Directive directs executive departments and agencies to take specific actions to implement the principles of transparency, participation, and collaboration set forth in the President's Memorandum.

ACUS has been engaged in a start-up mode for the past year, and is pleased to release its Open Government Plan.

### Plan

The Administrative Conference has a history of saving the government and taxpayers money. ACUS has made over 200 recommendations for improved agency decision-making, judicial oversight of the administrative process and valuable statutory proposals. In order for ACUS to continue to make an impact, we need public participation and to share our good work with our stakeholders. Openness, transparency and ease of finding information are paramount to our mission and goals.

The Administrative Conference of the United States is an independent federal agency dedicated to improving the administrative process through consensus-driven applied research, providing nonpartisan expert advice and recommendations for improvement of federal agency procedures. Its membership is composed of innovative federal officials and experts with diverse views and backgrounds from both the private sector and academia.

The Conference's mission is to improve how federal agencies interact with citizens and business in regulatory and adjudicatory functions. When President Obama appointed the members of the Conference's governing council on July 8, 2010, he called it "a public-private partnership designed to make government work better."



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From its inception in 2010, ACUS has served as a flagship of transparency, openness and accountability for federal agencies and the private sector. All congressional budget requests, plans and more may be found on the ACUS website. Currently the agency is working on posting over 200 of its historic recommendations and reports online, in full-text, searchable form.

Through a newly-launched website launched in December 2011, ACUS is on the cutting edge of new media, engaging the public and its stakeholders through live webcasts, blogs, and third party social media tools like twitter, dipity, ideascap and more. We now have an opportunity to reach across agencies, to reach out to Congress, to build stronger relationships with our critical stakeholders, our constituents – our customers – and help make government work better.

We are the new collaborators and believe in the power of good ideas and good government.

State and local elected officials, federal employees, and other stakeholders who have suggestions of topics or questions they want addressed should contact [info@acus.gov](mailto:info@acus.gov).

### Congressional Affairs

ACUS staff is composed of a dynamic, driven and interdisciplinary group of individuals dedicated to public service. We are a team of attorneys, economists, statisticians, technologists, writers, historians, graphic designers, and more. Congressional affairs, including requests for information, are handled by the Executive Director. The Executive Director also coordinates the Department's responses to congressional committee oversight requests and other inquiries from individual Members and congressional staff. The Communications Director facilitates the appearance of Department witnesses at congressional hearings and manages media relationships.

Letters from Members of Congress are directed to the Chairman for assignment to appropriate staff.

### Meetings and Events

The Administrative Conference of the United States events are generally open to the public and input from the government, members of the public, academia, the bar, and the business community are welcome. The Conference welcomes written feedback and solicits comments on its studies and projects prior to public meetings via its website at [comments@acus.gov](mailto:comments@acus.gov).

Members of the media seeking answers to research questions concerning research projects, studies, recommendations or any other topics should contact Kathy Kyle, Communications Director, at (202) 480-2091 or via email at [kkyle@acus.gov](mailto:kkyle@acus.gov). Administrative Conference transcripts, archival photographs, film or audio clips are available on the Administrative Conference website.

### Committee Meetings



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Members of the media wishing to attend are asked to RSVP via [comments@acus.gov](mailto:comments@acus.gov) and CC the Communications Director at [kkyle@acus.gov](mailto:kkyle@acus.gov). Advance notice is appreciated due to space limitations.

### Plenary Sessions

Because the location of these sessions varies on a case-by-case basis, members of the media seeking to attend should contact the Communication Director directly for complete details.

### Interview Requests

All requests for interviews with administration and staff should be made through the Communications Director at (202) 480-2091 or via email at [kkyle@acus.gov](mailto:kkyle@acus.gov).

Testimony: <http://www.acus.gov/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2011/01/5-19-2010-PVHouseTestimony-FINAL3.pdf>

## Evaluation

ACUS measures the effectiveness of its efforts through participation – both online and in-person at our public meetings, media coverage, and the feedback we receive via surveys from our members and the general public. For more information about our analytics, survey results, FOIA requests, or if you have general questions, contact us at [info@acus.gov](mailto:info@acus.gov).

## FOIA

Generally speaking, the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) provides that any person has the right to obtain access to federal agency records except to the extent that those records are protected from disclosure under FOIA or by some other statute. However, formal FOIA requests are unnecessary if you are seeking publicly available information. If you are unable to find the document you are seeking on our website, please contact us for assistance prior to filing a formal FOIA request. You may contact David Pritzker, the FOIA Liaison for the Administrative Conference, by e-mail at [dpritzker@acus.gov](mailto:dpritzker@acus.gov) or by telephone at 202-480-2080. By seeking assistance prior to filing a formal request, the response time may be faster.

It is also important to understand that each federal agency responds to requests for its own records. Therefore, before sending a request to ACUS you should determine whether ACUS actually is likely to have the records that you are seeking. Each federal agency is required to provide reference material to assist those who wish to request records from it, so you should view the website of any particular agency that might have the records in question. By doing so you will learn what records are already available on that website and you will also be able to determine which agency is likely to maintain the records you are seeking. Contact information for other federal departments and agencies is available on



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the FOIA home page of the United States Department of Justice, at <http://www.usdoj.gov/oip/foiacontacts.htm>.

Submit FOIA requests here: <http://www.acus.gov/foia/request/>

In 1996, after ACUS ceased operations, the agency's rules on how to make formal FOIA requests were deleted from Title 1, Part 304 of the CFR. On April 5, 2011, after a public comment period, the Administrative Conference published its final rule that implements the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act and the Privacy Act. Additional guidance will be provided in the ACUS FOIA Reference Guide, now being developed.

### Selected ACUS Documents

- [Administrative Conference Act](#)
- ACUS Audit Report Final (2010): [Download PDF \( !\[\]\(9a53fe79a03d38d8322f7a2c5a875b36\_img.jpg\) \)](#)
- [ACUS Bibliography](#)
- [ACUS Bylaws](#)
- ACUS Congressional Budget Justification (2012): [Download PDF \( !\[\]\(01f19d40f03100aa8a158c4891453b0d\_img.jpg\) \)](#)
- ACUS Congressional Budget Justification (2011): [Download PDF \( !\[\]\(e08cd99387e13601e6c12f535030ab90\_img.jpg\) \)](#)
- [ACUS Recommendations \(1968-1995\)](#)
- [Current Research Agenda](#)
- [Calendar of Events](#)
- [Public Participation in ACUS Activities \(Committee Meeting Procedures\)](#)

### FOIA Reports

- ACUS Annual FOIA Report (FY 2010) [PDF Version \( !\[\]\(b7e1c8bc060ab2af8bc42ce81bfcf3c4\_img.jpg\) \)](#)
- [XML Version](#) of ACUS Annual FOIA Report (FY 2010)
- ACUS Chief FOIA Officer Report (FY 2010) [PDF Version \( !\[\]\(2d0771195b0e0240efcbd9d75c7cddb8\_img.jpg\) \)](#)

### FOIA Resources

[Freedom of Information Act](#)

[ACUS FOIA and Privacy Act Final Regulation \( !\[\]\(47734e4656765d20df4fdbd5b7aff048\_img.jpg\) \)](#)



## ADMINISTRATIVE CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED STATES

### ACUS FOIA Reference Guide

#### [Your Right to Federal Records](#)

#### FOIA Contacts

For questions regarding the status of your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request, and where to find publicly available information on our website, contact:

David Pritzker at 202-480-2080, or [dpritzker@acus.gov](mailto:dpritzker@acus.gov).

For substantive questions regarding FOIA, contact:

Shawne McGibbon, the Designated FOIA Officer, at 202-480-2088, or [smcgibbon@acus.gov](mailto:smcgibbon@acus.gov).

### Plain Language

The Plain Writing Act of 2010 requires federal agencies to write "clear Government communication that the public can understand and use." President Obama also emphasized the importance of establishing "a system of transparency, public participation, and collaboration" in his January 21, 2009, Memorandum on Transparency and Open Government.

ACUS is committed to writing new documents in plain language, using the Federal Plain Language Guidelines.

We will use plain language in any document that:

- is necessary for obtaining any federal government benefit or service;
- provides information about any federal government benefit or service; or
- explains to the public how to comply with a requirement that the federal government administers or enforces.

Have you found a document that is hard to understand on our website? Please send the title of the page and the exact URL to [info@acus.gov](mailto:info@acus.gov).

### Transparency

The Administrative Conference of the United States is committed to achieving the President's goal of making this the most transparent Administration in history. By working collaboratively with a talented network of nonpartisan experts inside and outside of government (the bar, public interest groups, and the academic community), by seeking out new ideas from federal agency employees, and by tapping those who have institutional Conference knowledge, we hope to solve issues that will have a lasting, positive impact on the government landscape and the engage in a genuine conversation we have with the public.